

Rating: R-for language and violence.

Pairing: Buffy / Faith

Disclaimer: You know the drill.

Dedicated: Aw hell, I think I'll dedicate the rest of the whole damn series to Lance Armstrong for dominating the Tour De France, making his rivals look like third-rate spandex-wearing wannabes. He personifies the American fighting spirit we all have in us--you can do anything, achieve anything if you really want it; if you truly believe in yourself. There's nothing we can't do.

Notes: This is episode 9 in my series. Some things to keep in mind--I'm sure you get the idea when I write "A beat" in the action what it means. Same principal applies when you see it in the dialogue, like under Buffy's name I might put in parentheses "(a beat;)". The reason I put it in there instead of the action is to save space if I'm going to include a parenthetical in the dialogue for another reason, so it'll look like "(a beat; happily)" or whatever. I'm just covering my bases. The Female from the previous ep remains The Female in this one. She'll be used by an actual name in ep.10, a name you will find out here. I don't know how long this series will go...I don't think I can get in a full season's worth of 22 eps, at least not with what I currently have in mind. Maybe I can streeeeetch it out with some creative wrangling, but I expect to get to a minimum of 15. If you have any questions about anything, just email me. ENJOY!

FADE IN

EXT. SUMMERS HOUSE - NIGHT

FAITH sits on the stairs reading a Playboy. BUFFY comes out and looks over Faith's shoulder.

BUFFY

Cute.

FAITH

Ain't exactly the first word that comes to mind.

BUFFY

Ready?

FAITH

I'm gonna say no--a counterculture move.

BUFFY

You picturing my face on any of those bodies?

FAITH

I'm picturin' all their faces on

YOUR body.
Buffy considers that for a long moment.

BUFFY
There's a compliment you don't hear
every day.

Faith stands and tucks the magazine in the back of her jeans.
They descend the stairs.

FAITH
I believe in creativity.

BUFFY
Well, get it out in full force
tonight. We have to be on our game
to keep up with Spike and new girl.

FAITH
No shit. We can't catch 'em if we
don't move good, and we can't move
good if we're not on our feet.

Buffy playfully slaps Faith on the shoulder. Faith grabs
Buffy and strongly kisses her. When they separate:

FAITH
Let's keep our eyes on the prize babe.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

A gust of wind hits. XANDER maneuvers his way around. He's
a little unnerved by the quiet desolation.

XANDER
(whispering)
Hey!
(pause)
Come on. Where are you?
(pause)
Don't do this to me here!

FEMALE'S VOICE
(loudly)
Jumpy?

Xander YELPS, startled. He turns around, coming face-to-
face with THE Female.

FEMALE

Nice answer.

XANDER

I take it your people skills have yet to be refined.

FEMALE

I've got a lot more experience in that area than you think. Let's get to work.

XANDER

My friends are gonna find you sooner or later.

FEMALE

Then the least we could do is make sure they're as late on the scene as possible.

XANDER

THIS is not the way to do that. Buffy and Faith cover major ground together. When motivated, Dino could sweep the entire town before Katie Couric's bubbly head shows on the tube. Low profile this isn't.

FEMALE

Quit worrying. I'm not going to sit in my room just to avoid getting spotted by the vets. I've got needs, you know? Supernatural in addition to natural ones that are enhanced ten-fold thanks to the Gods. It's necessary for me to be out here. Now, either you can tag along and have some fun at everyone else's expense... or go home and be a do-nothin' nothin'.

A beat. Xander nods his concession. The Female smiles, glances at a tree, and leads Xander away.

When they're out of sight, the tree bristles heavily before SPIKE drops out and lands on his feet. He looks in the direction the duo went and grins wickedly.

END TEASE

ACT ONE

FADE UP

INT. SUMMERS HOUSE, DAWN'S ROOM - DAY

DAWN sits on the floor with an open textbook, writing in a notebook. She's depressed. A concerned Buffy appears.

BUFFY

Whatcha doin'?

DAWN

Homework.

BUFFY

You have no school for another thirteen days. Remember your break? Christmas break? Celebrating the birth of Christ and getting all sorts of super presents?

DAWN

That's why I'm doing this now. So I have more time to relentlessly enjoy my presents... and pray.

BUFFY

Oh yeah--I can hear the joyous anticipation in your voice.

Buffy walks over to Dawn who doesn't look up. Buffy touches Dawn's hair causing Dawn to flinch.

BUFFY

Are you okay?

DAWN

I will be.

BUFFY

When...

DAWN

...you leave.

BUFFY

Dawn, I thought we were clear that you could--

DAWN

(angrily)
--do you want me to graduate? We
can't all skip a thousand classes
and still walk away with a diploma.

Buffy's deflated. She walks out. Dawn stops writing and lets her pencil fall. She just sits for a moment. Her face softens. She stands and goes to the door. She looks out into the hallway, then SLAMS the door shut.

CUT TO:

INT. SUMMERS HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Buffy rubs her eyes as she enters the kitchen. Faith and WILLOW sit at the counter.

BUFFY
Teenagers.

WILLOW
(wistful)
Oh yeah--the halcyon days of
teenhood. Surviving school...

FAITH
Goin' often to second base.

WILLOW
Hanging out at the mall.

FAITH
Goin' occasionally to third base.

WILLOW
Fighting the forces of evil.

FAITH
Scorin' with the undead. Oh wait--
that's just B.

Willow's amused. Buffy isn't.

FAITH
You're not still frettin' over
comin' up with zip last night, are ya?

BUFFY
It's Dawn. She's--

WILLOW

--a teenager, as you so astutely pointed out.

BUFFY
You were with her the other night.
What happened?

WILLOW
I don't know.

BUFFY
Liar.

WILLOW
Hey--watch it vampire layer!

FAITH
Both of you--shut the fuck up. If
somethin's up with D, she'll take
care of it.

BUFFY
Christmas Eve is in three days and
my sister is in the dumps. She may
not have an easy time "taking care
of it".

WILLOW
And what does that have to do with me?

BUFFY
I just want to know. I think you
already do.

WILLOW
If I do, it's not my place to tell.

BUFFY
(sourly)
Thank you for your help.

WILLOW
Any time.

Willow pats Buffy on the shoulder and exits. Buffy takes
her seat.

BUFFY
This should be the merriest of
Christmases.

FAITH

Let it go. Relax. People can work
out their own problems.

BUFFY

Stop saying that. I worry. I help.
And this is my sister so I'll freak
out as much as I want.

(beat)

You can't understand.

Buffy hangs her head. Faith, discouraged, eyes Buffy for a
moment before turning away.

CUT TO:

INT. GILES' HOUSE - DAY

GILES scans his extensive book collection. His back is
turned to SYLVIA who intently rakes her eyes over the
collection. Giles pulls a book out, opens it and turns to
Sylvia.

GILES

Here it is. You'll find that
certain benign demons are only
benign in their demeanor. They
still possess deadly and even
apocalyptic capabilities. It's
just a matter of keeping them out
of the wrong hands.

Sylvia gets in very close with Giles and looks at the book.
Giles is very aware of her presence.

SYLVIA

Fascinating. It must be laborious
dealing with such a task, on top of
your other priorities.
With each day, my awe for you and
your charges grows.

Giles is flustered. Sylvia is cocky.

SYLVIA

I greatly appreciate your
hospitality Rupert. My time here
would've been far harder without you.

GILES

You--are very...welcome.

Sylvia smiles. Giles composes himself.

GILES

Would you like some tea?

SYLVIA

Love some. Thank you.

Giles hands Sylvia the book and rushes into the kitchen.
Sylvia half-smiles at his retreating form before closely
checking out the book collection.

SYLVIA

Is this all the volumes you have,
or do you own others elsewhere?

GILES (OS)

I tend to keep the most important
and many of the generalized ones at
Buffy's home since that is our
primary meeting place. However, I
do have the same editions here as
well... so basically yes.

SYLVIA

(to herself)

Good to know.

GILES (OS)

Do you believe my wealth of
literature is insufficient?

Sylvia keeps looking and her eyes stop at a red book with
foreign words on it.

SYLVIA

Absolutely not.

Sylvia takes the book.

CUT TO:

INT. DEAN HOUSE, ELLE'S ROOM - DAY

Curtains on the windows darken the room. ELLE quietly lies
on her side in bed, eyes open, ensconced in the covers.
There's a KNOCK and the door creaks open. DINO steps in.

DINO
You awake?

Nothing.

DINO
Lying in bed all day can't be
healthy. Want me to check your back?

Nothing.

DINO
Fine. Be like that. It's your call.

Dino leaves. Elle pulls the covers over her completely.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Buffy picks at her pasta. Faith practically inhales her club sandwich.

FAITH
Remind me we gotta stop by my place
to get some gloves. I wanna do an
outdoors workout later.

BUFFY
Sure. Umm, I was thinking...

Buffy drifts off.

FAITH
That's sorta a good thing, right?
Thinkin' means your brain's still
workin'.

BUFFY
The whole going back to YOUR place
thing brought to mind something
that's been on--my--mind.
Uh, yeah, so I figure it's pretty
ridiculous for you to sleep over at
my house every night while keeping
an apartment.

FAITH
All those other people who do it

probably don't see it as ridiculous.

BUFFY

What do "other people" know about us? We walk down the street and other people see us as regular old girlfriends. When we go home, we're lovers in love.

FAITH

Sounds like a friggin' great deal to me.

BUFFY

Me too. But I'd like it if, when we go home, it's not just MY home.

FAITH

I like havin' my own place.

BUFFY

I know, but there's no novelty factor. It's not like this is your first apartment.

FAITH

Yeah and this ain't your first time bein' in love. Quite a NOVEL fuckin' theory ya got there.

BUFFY

Don't get angry at me for wanting to LIVE WITH YOU.

FAITH

I'm not. I don't just like havin' my own place. It's the place itself. It's cool. It's me. It speaks to me.

BUFFY

Good. I'm glad.

Buffy stabs some pasta with her fork.

FAITH

Now you're angry.

BUFFY

I'm disappointed.

Faith ruefully shakes her head and goes back to her club.

CUT TO:

INT. DEAN HOUSE - EVENING

Dino sits on the couch watching "Die Hard". He's bored. He looks up at the ceiling, thinks for a moment, then looks over at the phone. He picks it up and dials.

INTERCUT:

INT. XANDER'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The phone RINGS several times until the answering machine takes over.

XANDER'S VOICE

This is the home of Xander Harris.
Not Xander Berkeley, who starred on
the first two seasons of "24". For
the five people that are still on
the phone, leave a message.

There's a BEEP. Dino hangs up.

DINO

This is why I hate the phone.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUMMERS BACKYARD - EVENING

Faith spars with Dawn.

FAITH

Stay mobile. Don't give 'em a
stationary target. Get in and out
fast. Combos and shit like that.
Watch the first two "Rocky" movies,
they got it.

Dawn stops just as Faith hits her with a right cross. Dawn stumbles back. A chagrined Faith hurries to help her.

FAITH

Geez, you all right? Why'd you stop?

DAWN

I--I lost my concentration. It's

nothing.

FAITH

Maybe you're studyin' too much.

DAWN

Could be.

FAITH

Bullshit.

DAWN

(confirming)

No shit.

Faith CHUCKLES and puts her arm around Dawn. They rest comfortably on the ground. Buffy comes out onto the porch and is thrown off by the sight in front of her.

BUFFY

I'm going out for a while. Take care of... whatever business shows its head.

FAITH

Doin' a patrol?

BUFFY

Probably.

FAITH

Alone?

Buffy stares for a long moment.

BUFFY

You deserve a night off. Relax. Have fun. If you're still here, I'll see you later.

Buffy goes back in the house. Faith's ticked off. Dawn throws a quizzical look Faith's way. Faith just smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. MALL - EVENING

Willow and ANYA carry around shopping bags.

WILLOW

I'm not in the wrong here, am I?

ANYA

Like I'd take Buffy's side over yours.

WILLOW

I love talking to Buffy. Always have.

ANYA

I'm a better listener than her.

WILLOW

These aren't MY talking points though. Sharing my feelings and problems and stuff with Buffy is entirely different from what amounts to gossip.

(with fake pep)

Hey, did you hear about those weird girls Dawn Summers and Elle Dean? Dawn professed her love to Elle and she totally got shot down! Like totally, for sure!

(seriously)

Exaggerated, but you get the point.

ANYA

Gossip girls don't say "professed".

The girls end up at a short wall with a railing allowing them to look down to the next level.

WILLOW

Maybe I should tell Buffy? She's under a lot of pressure already with Spike and the other slayer and watcher lady and Faith...

ANYA

Don't be silly. She's a slayer. She has a superhuman capacity for pressure and stress. Buffy's a bitch. Nobody really likes her. We're all merely enamored with her fabulous physical appearance.

WILLOW

We?

ANYA

My newly discovered fondness for

the same sex has given me a purely
superficial appreciation for the
spoiled bimbo.

WILLOW

You don't want her to know that, do
you?

ANYA

As if she needs another reason to
feel superior?

Willow LAUGHS. Anya beams with pride. Willow settles when
she notices something down below.

WILLOW

Isn't that Xander in the foodcourt?

Willow points. Anya's eyes follow. At a table is Xander
eating with the Female.

ANYA

It is. And he's with a whore! A
redheaded whore! Oh my God--he's
cheating on me with someone who
reminds him of you!

Anya SMACKS Willow on the shoulder. Willow SMACKS her back.
When they look back down, the Female is gone.

WILLOW

Hey, where--how did she--

Willow and Anya glance at each other suspiciously. They
look at Xander who checks his watch nonchalantly and leaves.

WILLOW

Investigate?

ANYA

(snarling)

What do you think?

CUT TO:

EXT. EAST SIDE CEMETERY - NIGHT

The Female strolls through, stake in hand. She slows her
stride, then with lightning quickness flicks the stake over
her shoulder behind her and spins to find the stake in
Spike's hand. The Female is perturbed.

SPIKE

Too bad I'm not a freshman--that
would've been impressive.

FEMALE

Give me my stake back and I'll try
again.

SPIKE

Good one. What's the matter
cutie--preying on the unsuspecting
evil alone? That's no way to slay.

FEMALE

It's no way to live either,
nonetheless I do it. Obviously
it's working. I'm still here.

SPIKE

Where's your toy boy?

FEMALE

I have no idea wha--

SPIKE

(laughing)

--of course you don't. You're all
the same... unwilling to trust the
vampiric enemy. It's bloody
unreasonable I say.

FEMALE

Are we gonna fight to the death or
what?

SPIKE

That won't cut it luv.

(approaching; ominously)

I know you... and I want something
from you.

The Female's face darkens.

CUT TO:

EXT. WATERFRONT HOTEL - NIGHT

Giles exits the hotel. He turns left.

BUFFY'S VOICE

Does she like your tea?

Giles halts. He slowly turns around.

BUFFY

We'd have to question her
credentials as a Brit if she didn't.

GILES

Are you following me?

BUFFY

Technically, no.

GILES

Coincidence?

BUFFY

The other night, yes. This... this
is about suspicion.

GILES

Of Sylvia...or myself?

BUFFY

I guess that depends on you. How
cozy are you getting with Lady MacBeth?

GILES

Why would you make such a query?

Buffy waves her arms and hands around where she and Giles are.

GILES

Say again?

BUFFY

Oh, so NOW you make a joke. What
really disturbs me is how Faith and
I told you how we'd handle Sylvia.
You agreed with our assessment,
even if you did it flippantly. And
what do you do? You fuck her!

GILES

Watch your language young lady.

BUFFY

Fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck. Are you
gonna fucking ground me Giles?
Send me to my room? Go ahead--I'll

sneak out, go to Faith's place and
fuck her senseless.

GILES

That is uncalled for.

BUFFY

Hours, Giles. We had a serious
conversation and HOURS later you go
to HER. When I called you...

GILES

I do not require a lecture. My
relations with Sylvia--the extent
of which is not for the public
record--does no harm. You may
sleep better if you accept that.

BUFFY

Because I'm consumed with concern,
right? It runs through my veins
next to those pesky red blood cells.
(intensely)

Someone has to be like that. Care
so much about this stupid world
that it hurts. Slayers can't be
machines anymore. The council
never understood that. You
recognized the reality here on the
ground--with me and Faith, compared
to Kendra. To save the modern
world, you need a modern slayer.
That girl feels human loss at the
very core of her being. Especially
her own loss. Her life. She has
to care about herself, make sure
she's still here when the sun comes
up. She cannot accept death as a
fact of life anymore, because life
as the slayer is still better than
not having one at all. And she has
to keep going, 'cause there's a
girl unknowingly waiting to take
her place. That girl doesn't
deserve it. That girl shouldn't
have to go through this if she
doesn't have to. The modern slayer
cares about the world, herself, and
her replacement. If she stops
caring, the world goes to hell
'cause it's keeper doesn't want it

anymore. And if she doesn't want it, there's a super-powerful force out there that will take it in a heartbeat. As for life... what's the point?

Giles is stunned into silence.

BUFFY

I wish it didn't have to be me.
But it is, and I want to make the best of it. I want to because I can.

GILES

I know. You explained your point of view extraordinarily well.

Satisfaction sneaks onto Buffy's face.

GILES

Still doesn't mean you're right in this case.

Buffy's head snaps up, her eyes filled with shock. Giles is almost apologetic.

GILES

Please have a good night Buffy.
Pleasant dreams.

Giles turns and walks away. On a disconcerted Buffy:

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE UP

INT. SUMMERS HOUSE - NIGHT

Faith fashions a stake in the living room. Dawn enters from the kitchen holding a plate with a sandwich.

DAWN

You're not gonna eat?

FAITH

Lunch spoiled me.

Dawn sits next to Faith. After a few long moments:

DAWN

(hesitantly)

How did you and Buffy get together?

FAITH

Any specific reason you're askin'?

DAWN

How specific do you want me to be?

FAITH

Enough to clear your head.

(beat)

Your sister's a wuss. You know how they say a tragedy or near-death experience can put everything in perspective?

Dawn nods.

FAITH

Well, it took ME losin' MY slayer strength and almost losin' MY life to wake HER the fuck up.

DAWN

Bitter?

FAITH

Not when she tastes so fuckin' sweet.

DAWN

EEEEWWWWWWWWWW!

FAITH

I'll tell you this much D-Cup... you don't get nothin' meaningful in life just by talkin'.

Dawn takes that to heart.

CUT TO:

INT. XANDER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Xander opens the door for a steely Willow and Anya.

XANDER

I'd say good evening, but who are we kidding?

Willow and Anya push their way in. Xander shuts the door.

XANDER

I'm glad you accepted my unspoken invitation to enter.

ANYA

Who's the slut?

XANDER

You for sleeping with Faith?

ANYA

That is not funny.

XANDER

I was being serious.

Anya SHRIEKS. Xander and Willow shrink back.

XANDER

What do you want?

WILLOW

We saw you at the mall.

ANYA

With the redheaded cu--

Willow sweeps her hand over Anya's mouth to quiet her.

WILLOW

Let me handle this part.

Willow takes her hand away. She opens her mouth, then looks at her hand.

WILLOW

(appalled; to Anya)

You licked my hand?

Willow wipes it on her pants.

ANYA

Like chicken.

XANDER

You saw me at the mall--so what?

WILLOW

You were with a redhead.

XANDER

I looked it up--there are
approximately 370 adult women with
red hair in Sunnydale.

WILLOW

This one matches a certain description.

XANDER

More like PREscription for the
Xander blues.

WILLOW

She was there one second, gone the
next.

XANDER

Those magicians sure are tricky.

WILLOW

Xander, how could you?

XANDER

How could I what? Live my own life?
I have the ability to meet new people.

WILLOW

That's great under normal
circumstances, but most new people
aren't slayers!

XANDER

Oh, so now you're accusing me of
hiding a superhero.

ANYA

ALLEGED superhero.

XANDER

Get out.

ANYA

Give us answers!

XANDER

Ask better questions!

ANYA

How dare you intentionally hurt us
by hiding information?

XANDER

I said BETTER.

Anya prepares to retort, but Willow stops her. She goes to Xander and places her left hand on his shoulder.

WILLOW

Whether you're proving your real value or getting payback, this is the wrong way to go about it. Frankly, you don't need to do either in the first place. We wish you could believe that. We always have.

Xander's firm stance cracks. He puffs up his chest.

XANDER

Say hi to Buffy for me.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Willow and Anya go down. Willow isn't as somber as Anya.

ANYA

I can't believe him. That's it--I am not doing him again until 2006. Or day before the end of the world--whichever comes first.

WILLOW

That'll teach him. Don't worry, this was productive.

ANYA

If I have to lick you to bring you back to reality, I'll do it!

Willow opens her left hand, displaying a strand of red hair.

WILLOW

(proudly)

My hand suffers from static cling. Can you say locator spell?

Willow and Anya high five.

CUT TO:

INT. GILES' HOUSE - NIGHT

Giles walks around as he sips his tea and reads a book. He drops the book to his side and SIGHS. He leans back against the bookcase, contemplative, looking at the framed pictures of the kids that fill the room. He turns his head to the side and eventually something amongst the books captures his interest. He eyes the entire bookcase, feverishly trying to figure out what's alerted him.

CUT TO:

INT. SYLVIA'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Sylvia reads the book on the bed, phone next to her leg. After a while, her lips form a huge smile. She giddily punches the book and SQUEALS. She picks up the phone, dials, and after a moment:

SYLVIA

Mr. Richter? Sylvia Wright. I've got it.

(pause)

Thank you. This was the easy part. I believe it would be prudent to wait for the end of the holidays... there appears to be more activity than forecasted.

(pause)

What else to expect from the world's premier hellmouth? 'Tis the season...

CUT TO:

INT. SUMMERS HOUSE - NIGHT

Buffy steps in and immediately hears GIGGLING. She shuts the door and enters the living room where Faith and Dawn watch porn.

BUFFY

What are you doing?

DAWN

Mocking porn.

FAITH

It's a traditional family activity.

BUFFY

(to Faith)
You're still here... great.

FAITH
Nice to know you think so.

BUFFY
(to Dawn)
Finished your homework?

Dawn shrugs.

FAITH
It's pretty early--what did you do?

BUFFY
Went to the Waterfront.

FAITH
(pointedly)
For what?

BUFFY
To see if Giles was there.

FAITH
Was he?

BUFFY
He was. And I talked to him.

FAITH
(leaping out of her seat)
Without me?!
(getting in Buffy's face)
What the fuck is up with you?
You're in a bad fuckin' mood so you
do somethin' major with me in the dark?

BUFFY
I think it's importance is in the
eye of the beholder.

FAITH
Well what the fuck are my eyes
beholdin'?

BUFFY
I don't see the big deal. Giles
didn't give me anything. In fact,
he blew me off.

FAITH

I ain't surprised, with the shit
that can fly outta your mouth.

BUFFY

Yeah, compared to the celebrated
statesman that is you.

FAITH

I tell it like it is.

BUFFY

And what does it get you besides
eye-rolls and embarrassment?

FAITH

It got me you.

BUFFY

A dubious achievement considering
my track record.

FAITH

I thought this was "slayer
business". Either it's not now or
I ain't a real slayer in your eyes.

BUFFY

That is the dumbest thing I've ever
heard in my life. Anya would be proud.

FAITH

Bite yourself ELIZABETH.

Buffy GROWLS. The duo have a SCREAMING MATCH. Dawn takes
that as her cue to go upstairs.

CUT TO:

INT. SUMMERS HOUSE, DAWN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dawn shakes her head as she enters. She momentarily listens
to the ARGUING before loading her backpack and heading out
the window.

CUT TO:

EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

Everybody's Business – Rocky

Close on Spike as he lets out a sated SIGH and wipes his lips. There's HEAVY BREATHING off-screen.

SPIKE

We should do this again. Dru would get a kick out of you. You and me... we're good for the future.

Spike CACKLES.

SPIKE

'Night.

Pull back as Spike walks out of the alley, leaving behind a dizzy, disrupted Female to massage her inner thighs.

CUT TO:

INT. SUMMERS HOUSE - NIGHT

Buffy and Faith continue their stand-off.

FAITH

You're missin' the point. You kept me in this room to talk to Giles that first time 'cause it was important. He wasn't thinkin' right and he needed to be confronted. It wasn't just you to do it--it was me too. That's the way YOU wanted it.

BUFFY

I did and I still do. This time though, you were busy... didn't want to disturb you.

Faith is incredulous.

FAITH

That is the most pathetic lie I ever heard in my life, and I come from the home of Ted Kennedy!

(beat)

Why is it so important that I move in with you?

BUFFY

That has nothing to do with anything.

FAITH

Yeah right. It ain't enough that

I'm still in town, I gotta station
myself in the House of Pain?

BUFFY

You practically live here already!
I don't hear any complaints with my
head between your legs!

FAITH

No--it's pretty much the rest of
the time, when you're usin' your
mouth to TALK!

BUFFY

Keep talking like that, I'll shut
up in more ways than one.

Faith stays quiet. The door flies open as Willow and Anya
cascade in. They freeze when they see the tense couple.

WILLOW

Hey... you two... lovebirds?

ANYA

Willow and I are on the verge of
finding a girl that may or may not
be the missing redhead who may or
may not be a slayer. If we do find
her and she is who we want her to
be and she is a slayer, does that
mean we can lead the group?

Buffy and Faith stare. Anya's defiant.

WILLOW

(calling out to the ceiling)

What's that, oh magical spirits?

Time is running out? Okay.

(to the girls)

My room is calling.

Willow drags Anya upstairs. Buffy turns back to Faith.

BUFFY

Aren't you going to say anything?

FAITH

Red's a freak.

Buffy glares.

FAITH

I ain't stupid.

BUFFY

It's comforting to know that's what
you like most about me.

FAITH

That's a bullshit move to make me
feel guilty.

BUFFY

You're right--you ain't stupid.

Faith shakes her head and takes a deep breath.

FAITH

I did nothin' to deserve this.

BUFFY

It's an argument. They happen.
Want to feel better? Go play with
Dawn... apparently she's a blast
for anyone not named Buffy.

FAITH

Wow, there's no dead-end for your
weak unspectacular misery, is there?
God, you're so fuckin' petty!

BUFFY

The hell I am!

FAITH

Hard to see when you're so self-
absorbed. But we all know how much
bigger and more important it is to
be Buffy Summers.

Buffy's stiff upper lip begins to waver.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND - NIGHT

Humans and demons mix and match. From behind a door comes a
blood-curdling SCREAM. All eyes go to the door. Moments
later, the SCREAM ends, the door opens and Dawn walks out.
The crowd erupts in applause. Dawn curtsies and goes on her
way. She stops at the sight of Dino at a booth guzzling a

beer as he reads the newspaper. He doesn't see her. Dawn's face hardens. Her eyes sparkle. She looks around and spots a hot goth chick alone in a corner. She goes over to the goth chick and whispers something in her ear. Dawn points at Dino, then whispers something else. The goth chick thinks for a moment before nodding and going to Dino. Stay with Dawn as she watches the goth chick go to work, coaxing Dino out of the booth and off towards a staircase.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUMMERS HOUSE - NIGHT

Faith storms out with Buffy on her heels.

BUFFY
We're not done.

FAITH
Says you. I'm goin' home. Not my novelty temporary residence... MY FUCKIN' HOME.

BUFFY
There's no appeal in rubbing it in.

As they reach the sidewalk, Buffy grabs Faith and spins her so they face each other.

BUFFY
(desperately)
Please don't go.

FAITH
Geez, clingy much? Like you said, it's just an argument.

BUFFY
I--I can't let you leave like this. Walking these streets with that attitude, it's like what they say about married couples going to bed angry at each other. Bad things happen--nightmares, unconscious physical and emotional resentment...

FAITH
You are seriously readin' too much into this. I appreciate the commitment babe, but you're freakin'

me out.

SPIKE'S VOICE

Me too.

Spike struts up to the girls who quickly get on alert.

SPIKE

(to Buffy)

Damn it love, if I wasn't standing
in front of you, you'd be
unrecognizable. All because of--:
(bitingly; at Faith)
--THIS.

FAITH

Your whacked-out girlfriend must be
contagious.

SPIKE

A hollow threat considering you
won't touch me.

Faith stuns Spike with a high-kick to the face.

SPIKE

Considering you won't KILL me. Not
tonight at least.

BUFFY

Why's that? You have thirty
seconds before we actually do kill you.

SPIKE

A whole lot of horrible shit's
going down in a couple of days.
The worst of the demon community--a
large contingent--is planning a
Christmas Eve Eve rampage. They
won't spare a single innocent soul
unless you stop them.

BUFFY

(to Faith)

Thirty seconds has passed, right?

FAITH

(to Spike)

Can you prove it?

BUFFY

(shocked at Faith)
What?

SPIKE
The primo sources are susceptible
to slayer strong-arming. I'm sure
even your own reliable sources can
back me up.

BUFFY
Bullshit can have many different
smells. The plan sounds based on
an idea created in the mind of a
serial-killing sociopath. In case
you're having trouble following,
that's YOU.

SPIKE
You think I'm insincere?

BUFFY
Duh.

FAITH
I ain't so sure.

Buffy snaps towards Faith. Spike grins. Buffy pushes Faith
a few feet away from Spike so they can have a semi-private talk.

BUFFY
Tell me you have some kind of plan
to trick Spike into a torture
situation and that's why we aren't
killing him right now.

FAITH
What if he's tellin' the truth? We
can't have God-knows-how-many demon
fucks tearin' the town apart two
days before Christmas. Especially
if they're goin' after anyone and
everyone...

BUFFY
We'll stop them when they try.
We've got solid numbers along with
the L.A. crew ready and willing to
help.

FAITH
We can save every single life with

a preemptive strike. Wait... could
be one of your neighbors turns up
under a tree as a headless corpse.
Not even I had it that bad B.

BUFFY

He did nothing to deserve this kind
of trust.

FAITH

You saw him save all those people.
I ain't sayin' it's a change of
heart--maybe it's a holiday thing.
Maybe he's settin' up the town for
somethin' bigger, wants more people
alive for a more satisfyin'
armageddon, him bein' a serial-
killin' sociopath and all. But
that's a bunch of shit to deal with
another day. Livin' in the
moment... playin' loose with
thousands of lives is a fool's game.

BUFFY

You propose to play a game whose
rules are created by a vampire--our
archenemy... over my more than
reasonable objections. Who the
fuck is being petty now?

Faith and Buffy get into a staring match. Faith flinches
first and addresses to Spike.

FAITH

We're gonna need confirmation on
your reliability.

Buffy dips her head, defeated.

SPIKE

You want something useful. I know
a secret. Wanna see?

Faith glances at Buffy who doesn't look at anyone. Spike
loves every second.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE UP

INT. SUMMERS HOUSE, WILLOW'S ROOM - NIGHT

Candles provide the light. Used spell materials are bunched in a circle. A bright, shiny ball of energy hovers near the door, sort of impatient. It's not going anywhere because Willow and Anya are making out on the floor. There's MOANING, hands touching everywhere. Willow pulls her lips away. Anya lavishes attention on Willow's neck.

WILLOW

(weakly insistent)

Anya.

(pause)

ANYA--we have to--we have to follow,
find the girl, do our job.

ANYA

(still necking)

Must get rid of the horniness first.

WILLOW

What about Buffy and Faith?

ANYA

(popping her head up)

Let 'em have their own sex!

Anya buries her face in Willows chest. Willow doesn't object.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Buffy, disgruntled, stands expectantly with Faith and Spike. Spike points at a building across the street.

SPIKE

That one. Sheltered down below.
Generally a primo hiding spot.
Girl's got smarts. Of course,
don't gotta be a genius to avoid
you two.

Buffy's fist makes a beeline for Spike's face, but is intercepted by Faith's hand.

BUFFY

Traitor.

FAITH

He'll get his, babe.

BUFFY
Don't call me that.

FAITH
Whatever.

BUFFY
(to Spike)
You know what we can sense. If
she's not the real deal, it's your
arms and legs.

SPIKE
Yeah yeah yeah. I'm confident
enough to shake on that.

BUFFY
I'm not touching you in any
respectful manner.

Spike, exuding smarmy charm, turns to Faith.

FAITH
I showered.
(beat)
All right, let's bust a move. I
got plants to water at home.

Buffy rolls her eyes. She and Faith step into the street,
but Spike stays put. Buffy and Faith notice.

FAITH
"Bust a move" means move your ass!

SPIKE
You need to see this for yourself.
Without my influence. The truth
will be revealed that way.

BUFFY
If the truth is a room filled with
bad guys ready to kill us.

SPIKE
I'm doing you a favor!

FAITH
One more won't hurt. We don't go

in unless you do.

Spike stands firm, as do Buffy and Faith.

SPIKE

(shaking his head)

After all we've been through...

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY/APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The trio hit the bottom of the stairwell. Spike signals to keep quiet. Buffy grabs him by the coat.

BUFFY

(quietly threatening)

If you run, I'll know.

Spike slaps Buffy's hand away. He leads them down the hall to an unmarked door. Spike steps off to the side. Buffy moves to knock, but Faith stops her. Buffy gives her a quizzical look. Faith answers by moving to kick the door in. Buffy stops her. They argue silently, but adamantly. Spike's head lulls in disbelief. He steps forward and kicks the door in, then quickly jumps out of sight of the open doorway. Buffy and Faith quit arguing and peer into the apartment where the Female is motionless, a deer-in-the-headlights attitude. Buffy and Faith enter the apartment.

FEMALE

Coulda knocked.

Buffy and Faith share a look.

FEMALE

Xander rat me out?

Buffy and Faith share a longer, deeper look this time.

BUFFY

(pointing at the phone)

Call him.

CUT TO:

INT. DEAN HOUSE, ELLE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Elle's still in bed, in the dark, same position as earlier. The door creaks open, a glimmer of light sneaking in. Angle on Elle's face. She knows someone is there and is not happy

about it.

ELLE

I'm sleeping.

Silence.

ELLE

I'm not sleeping, but I want to be,
so leave.

Silence. Elle grows impatient. Her eyes clamp shut in frustration, then shoot open. As she rolls over and leans upward:

ELLE

Please, just...

Her voice is lost as she comes face to face with Dawn, cool calm and collected with an air of intensity.

DAWN

...go?

The burning desire in Dawn's eyes has Elle hypnotized.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

So quiet you can actually hear the clock TICKING. Buffy and Faith hover a solid distance from where the Female sits on a couch.

FEMALE

(waving at the open seats)

Why don't you sit down. Unclench.

They don't move. Just stare with arms crossed.

FEMALE

What in the freakin' hell did I do
to you?!

BUFFY

You were called!

FEMALE

Something I take NO responsibility
for! Which is probably what you
say when asked about your hair color.

BUFFY

(condescending)

Sounds to me like yet another
pathetic red-headed stepchild,
neglected by the powers that be in
favor of the real heroes.

FEMALE

(to Faith)

What the hell do you see in this bitch?

Faith is in no hurry to answer, irritating Buffy.

BUFFY

You're not going to defend me?

FAITH

Apparently bein' diplomatic ain't
my strong suit.

Buffy grits her teeth. Spike swoops in theatrically.

SPIKE

Are we gettin' this done anytime
soon? I got a bloodbath to get to.
(not-at-all seriously)
Oh, my, did I say bloodbath? I
meant BUBBLE bath.

Spike smirks. The slayers are stone cold.

SPIKE

(jovial)

Oh come on! Ditch the pms, it'll
make the experience tolerable. I
found the light--sporting the white
cap.

FEMALE

Allied with a vampire... I haven't
been this nauseous since Mardi Gras.

BUFFY

A morality play from the absentee
slayer... gee, what do I say? Oh
yeah--SHUT THE HELL UP!

Silence blankets the room. There's a lot of shifting and
shuffling. No one wants to set off any of the others.
After a while, FOOTSTEPS can barely be heard from the hall.

Everybody's Business – Rocky

Xander appears looking down at the door, unaware of who's inside.

XANDER

As of this moment I am a door specialist.

(looking up)

Did you--

He stops at the sight of his spiritless friends and Spike.

XANDER

--call me here for a reason.

The Female avoids eye contact. Buffy and Faith are disappointed. Xander struggles under the scrutiny.

CUT TO:

INT. GILES' HOUSE - NIGHT

Giles compulsively documents the books he has in stock. He's maddened by his own little mystery. He pinches his nose and pounds his forehead on the coffee table, believing he's making a bigger deal of this than it should be.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Xander's getting grilled.

BUFFY

So what's your next double-cross?

"Failing" to warn us of a death trap?

XANDER

I don't know why YOU'RE here. I'm here to see-- my--fuckbuddy.

FEMALE

(emphatic)

Whoa there--sorry guy but I can't let such a blatant, disgusting lie be perpetuated. Just cop to the accusations.

XANDER

I haven't been accused of anything.

SPIKE

The double-cross! You're better off committing treason, at least you get a trial before gettin' the chair.

XANDER

Okay, while I do respect everyone's point of view--excluding Spike's whose presence with three slayers is incomprehensible--I think taking a rational perspective of this situation would show...

(darkly)

...that you all suck.

FAITH

Christ X, this don't just LOOK unbelievably fuckin' bad, it FEELS unbelievably fuckin' bad and IS unbelievably fuckin' bad.

XANDER

That's not overstating it?

BUFFY

(shouting)

You didn't tell us about her! It's hard to overstate intentionally hurting your friends.

XANDER

So, what, as punishment I've been replaced by Spike? Mine aren't the only screwed-up priorities.

FAITH

It's a temp thing ya pussy. We got major shit to deal with without worryin' about your fragile emotions leadin' to bullshit like this.

Xander ominously moves into Faith's personal space.

XANDER

Watch your mouth you cunt-eating psycho slutbomb--Anya told me what you two did. If damage could be done, I'd beat the shit out of you for as long as Buffy fucked you last night.

Faith takes the heat with an icy exterior, holding Xander's scornful gaze. It's frightening for Buffy, has her on edge, fearful this will go too far. Spike slides over to Buffy.

SPIKE

Make sure you fill me in on all the gossip I missed. Sounds righteous.

Buffy exhaustively shoves him. Faith and Xander are breathing with a dangerous calm. The Female gets up and zeroes in on leaving but Buffy gets in her path.

BUFFY

Where do you think you're going?

FEMALE

I get the distinct feeling this is family business. You stay, relax, fight, eat butter cookies--I'll go search for a passable life.

BUFFY

You're a slayer--since "passable" is the best you can do, it'll take YEARS to achieve. I'm proof of that.

FEMALE

I don't take orders from you. I'm bigger than you.

BUFFY

I'm the senior slayer. This is my show, my town, I won't order you around but I'll assert my authority when necessary.

FEMALE

And this is necessary?

BUFFY

It's volatile, mainly because a holiday massacre is on the horizon and your help would be a big step in saving lots of lives. Yeah--it's necessary.

A beat.

FEMALE

(admiringly)

Nice assertion of your authority.

I guess that's why you're the leader...

(off Faith)

...why she hammers your box with her own measure of authority...

SPIKE

That's not why. You ever wanna hear the nasty kink--

Buffy punches Spike to quiet him. Everyone's attention is caught by a shrill SHRIEK. In the doorway is an enraged Anya, shooting a wilting glare at Buffy. A flushed and glowing Willow is next to Anya, acting too casual for her own good.

ANYA

(screaming)

Why must you insist on being better than everyone! God damn it, I HATE YOU!

Another SHRIEK. It's a group effort in seeming perplexed. Anya storms out. Willow hangs around, embarrassed. She bashfully waves goodbye and leaves.

SPIKE

(murmuring)

Speaking of "hammering the box"...

The break in action between Faith and Xander allows Buffy to jump in and push Xander towards the door.

BUFFY

All right, we're gonna talk.

FAITH

Hey--I ain't done with him!

XANDER

And vice-versa--with a vengeance.

BUFFY

No. This is a monumental crash waiting to happen.

(off Xander; to the others)

I'll deal with him while you three check out Spike's info. I don't have to warn you to be careful--still, keep me on speed dial in case, not so surprisingly, Spike

turns an evil trick.

SPIKE

For the sake and welfare of the people, I won't take offense to that thinly veiled shot calling me a murder whore.

FAITH

So we're doin' the heavy while you two work out your problems? An excuse to get rid of me? Fuckin' A!

BUFFY

I didn't want to come in the first place, putting our livelihoods under Spike's direction. You insisted... you fucked Anya... so fuck off and do your job!

The trio head out. As they exit, Faith sends a fleeting look at Buffy. Buffy is soft and filled with regret, doing nothing to soothe Faith's resentment.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE UP

INT. WILLIE'S BAR - NIGHT

Sparse. Willie tallies the giant wad of cash in his grasp. Faith, Spike, and the Female enter with a stealthy bravado that instantly gets Willie's attention. He fumbles his cash.

WILLIE

Oh oh, um...
(deferring the cash to them)
...I value my worthless life. You don't see it that way, sure, but as an inhabitant of this vast land of opportunity I stake my claim to the space I take, no matter how wasteful you believe my space to be. This is my offering, kill me if you must. But let me remind you--the world needs a snitch.

That gets blank stares. The Female enamors herself with the jukebox. Faith and Spike hit the bar.

WILLIE

Am I suddenly out of the loop? Is
doing my thing poorly grounds for
killing me?

FAITH

Not trappin' your trap so I can ask
questions'll do the job.

(off Willie's silence)

Thanks. So, any holiday surprises
on the dirtbag radar?

WILLIE

C'mon slayer, this ain't your first
Christmas in the 'Dale. You know
the score.

FAITH

Yeah and it says my girl whooped
the First Evil by three touchdowns.
I know you didn't forget about the
fuckin' miracle snow.

WILLIE

(fondly)

First snowball fight I had in
sixteen years.

SPIKE

(woefully)

It physically pains me, the memory.
And I was in Bolivia at the time.

WILLIE

Okay, you're not used to the norm.
Evil's idle, you should be too.

FAITH

So the 23rd ain't earmarked to
become a red-letter date in
American history?

WILLIE

(a beat; to Spike)

Do I describe ya to the newsletter
as disingenuous... or ingenious?

SPIKE

I prefer strikingly handsome.

FAITH

Spill Will. I want a name from you.
It better be a sweet lead, 'cause
if it's sour...

She rolls her head in the Female's direction. Willie goes
along and watches the Female tap the glass of the jukebox.

FEMALE

Mmm, I love that album!

The Female smashes the glass, to Willie's chagrin, and yanks
out a cd. She admires it for a moment, flips it in the air,
catches and frisbees it at a patron unlucky enough to have
his drinking hand moving upward. The cd slices his hand off
cleanly. The patron HOWLS in agony as blood squirts out.
Willie is sufficiently bullied.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Xander stumbles out of the building, Buffy charging behind.

BUFFY

Imagine my non-surprise that you'd
do something so utterly stupid and
irresponsible after throwing one of
your manly hissy fits!

XANDER

A hissy fit? HISSY FIT?

BUFFY

Of the manly variety because
contrary to popular opinion, you
are still a man. For now.

XANDER

This is rich--YOU are angry with ME?
I'm the only problem!

BUFFY

You overreacted the other day about
a well-known secret and to punish
us you keep an important secret to
the detriment of the group--the
whole damn town.

XANDER

If I overreacted, then you have tonight.

BUFFY

Bullshit! This is a serious breach of trust Xander. We depend on you.
(off Xander's snort)

The only member of this group who devalues your contribution is you.

(off another Xander snort)

Shut it you inconsiderate crybaby! Never in a million years would you be held in a lower regard than everyone else. It's your own fault for feeling like shit.

XANDER

No no no, it comes with a little help from my friends. Your feelings are hurt by this? By not knowing something important? Welcome to the club.

BUFFY

So instead of coming to me; sitting me down; talking to me, giving me your side, explaining in depth why you feel the way you do... you go the retaliation route.

XANDER

It's a very scenic route. I found it to be captivating, satisfying-- despite its relative shortness.

BUFFY

In your mind, I deserved that?

A beat.

XANDER

My mind isn't the only place.

CUT TO:

INT. SUMMERS HOUSE, WILLOW'S ROOM - NIGHT

Willow observes with mild interest as Anya downs a bottle of bourbon in earnest. When finished, Anya's face contorts.

ANYA

(pitifully)

I did excellent work for the benefit of the team, spoiled by the epic greatness that is Buffy.

WILLOW

WE. Don't forget the team effort that went into benefiting the team.

ANYA

I'm sorry honey. Please don't hate me for not including you in my self-aggrandizement.

Anya throws herself on Willow's outstretched lower half.

WILLOW

It's perfectly understandable ANYA.

ANYA

Feel free to bestow upon me a term of endearment.

WILLOW

Your name is a term... that has endearing qualities. So there.

ANYA

Can I do anything for you? I'm drunk, but I retain the capability to make coffee, say words like "capability", and sexually pleasure your feet.

Willow tosses her head back in exasperation. She flings it forward, adorning a curiously intrigued expression.

ANYA

(a hint of fancy)

You're into foot play?

CUT TO:

INT. BACKROOM - NIGHT

Faith whips a five-eyed green demon into the wall. A sixth eye has been gouged out. The Female presides over several other demons cowering in a corner. Spike makes a production out of smoking his cigarette.

FAITH

Ya got five eyes left, I still got
two hands and two feet that can
fuck up ten of you on steroids, not
to mention hair with a wicked attitude.

GREEN DEMON

(quivering)

I never did nothing to you or your
friends. I don't do nothing period.
I'm lazy. Too lazy to be actively
evil. Please let me go.

FAITH

Sorry dude, reliable intel put me
in this room and your body in my
possession. Gotta face the reality
of the situation. It's your own fault.

GREEN DEMON

Who sent you?

FAITH

Aw, hey, what are you doin' askin'
that? You know the law of the
street--normal, evil or otherwise--
ya don't rat out a rat. Even if it
is Willie. Understand Mr. Green
Bean, gimme the answer I want and
not only do you live, but you live
with vision.

The Green Demon puts aside his fear to think. He peers
scornfully at Spike.

GREEN DEMON

Selling out your comrades. Hard to
imagine givin' evil a worse name
than it already has...

Spike smoothly releases some smoke. He takes a spot next to
Faith and uses his non-smoking hand to hold open one of the
green demon's eyes. Spike raises the cigarette and, in
spite of the terrified SCREAMS, burns the eye with the lit end.

GREEN DEMON

Okay, okay! What do you wanna know?!

At Faith's prodding, Spike stops. The eye's done.

FAITH

There's gotta be a ring leader.

Spike sways behind Faith. He's having a blast.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Buffy and Xander are still at it.

XANDER

I deserve to know about certain
aspects of your personal life.
That's not overstepping a boundary
'cause I'm one of your best friends.
At least, I'm supposed to be.

BUFFY

I'm not arguing against that! But
you can't expect an announcement
with every step I take in my
relationship.

XANDER

You didn't tell me about the FIRST
step!

BUFFY

I'm dating a GIRL. Someone I tried
to kill and who tried to kill me...

XANDER

That's not unusual.

BUFFY

This doesn't compare with Spike.

XANDER

No shit! This isn't some sordid
fuckfest, needy affair with Spike!
(softly; tired)

You're in love with Faith. That's
a good thing. I like her, I trust
her, I want her to be happy in the
same way I want for you and
Willow. It's a very good thing.
And if you had told me sooner,
everything I just said would've
been said a lot sooner.

A long beat.

BUFFY

I--appreciate that. And I'd like to say all the people I love are on my mind 24 hours a day. Fact is, you weren't a concern for me the last few weeks. I hate saying it, but it's true. I was focused on Faith--on Faith and me--on these new feelings that alter your entire sense of being. I am not the same person I was a few weeks ago, and telling you just wasn't a priority.

XANDER

Neither was Willow, right? Didn't stop you from telling her.

BUFFY

That was a natural reaction. You have NEVER approved of my love life as long as YOU aren't in it!

XANDER

(shakily defiant)

I am not jealous.

BUFFY

I didn't say you were! But over seven years, a pattern is created that makes you do things in a knee-jerk fashion. It's not based on instinct--it's experience. Seven years of absorbing your responses to my latest romantic relationship, whatever with whoever it was. Deep down, yeah I felt I could tell Willow without a problem.

(pause)

Despite that, you mean no less to me than she does. I love you Xan. I need you in my life... I want you in my life. I don't want it to be like this.

Xander heaves a heavy SIGH and falls back against a mailbox.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAIR - NIGHT

Dark and gloomy. A stone wall with a door partially open.
Faith and Spike divide their attention between what's
happening inside and each other.

SPIKE

How do we know she's not a fag hag?

FAITH

You know, I never met a homo demon.
This is California, what the fuck?

SPIKE

It's not gay. The punk inside is a
Faggilicius demon. They got a
peculiar charm that reels in the
chicks, which is why they steal
human bodies.

FAITH

(with distaste)

God, you're not sayin'...

SPIKE

This new generation of slayers...
sexual deviants up and down the
line. Oh the depravity, it's--

Spike's awareness heightens. Faith catches on. They listen
carefully. The door opens forcing Faith and Spike to
scuttle back. The Female comes out, cocky, hands behind her
back.

FAITH

What's the what?

FEMALE

There's a meeting tomorrow night,
last minute prep. Got the locale.

SPIKE

Good work. Did you, uh--
(lasciviously;
imitating a hand-job)
--beat it out of him?

Faith rolls her eyes nearly out of their sockets.

FEMALE

Pretty much. Wanna take a shot?

Everybody's Business – Rocky

The Female quickly tosses a penis in Spike's face. Spike CRIES OUT, finding it repugnant. Faith cracks up.

CUT TO:

EXT. XANDER'S BUILDING - DAWN

Buffy and Xander reach the front. There's a silent few moments as both try to summon the right way to end the night.

BUFFY

I'm glad we did this. When I called you an inconsiderate crybaby, I said it with only seven percent heart. Seventeen at most.

XANDER

Woo hoo. As proof that I'm the better man, when I called you an overrated ballet bouncer, it was done at SIXTEEN percent.

BUFFY

Umm, you didn't call me that... in my presence.

XANDER

I never said I did, and I certainly never said it was me who said it. In fact, I'm pretty sure you called yourself that--after commenting on my stallion sexual ability.

BUFFY

Funny, Faith described that as a pedestrian pony.

XANDER

(emphatically)

It was my first time!

Buffy smiles. She kisses Xander on the cheek.

BUFFY

Get some sleep. Come over at around six for a planning session.

XANDER

Sounds like a plan.

Buffy begins walking. Xander stops her when:

XANDER

Hey!

(after Buffy turns around)

You do realize as a screwed-over
heterosexual male, I have to get in
one good punch on Faith.

BUFFY

Xan, at this point, I hope you
knock her out.

CUT TO:

INT. DEAN HOUSE - MORNING

Dino groggily tosses his keys on a table. He checks the
kitchen--empty. The whole first floor is the same, a
demoralizing observation. He goes upstairs and to the door
at the end of the hall. He opens it and peeks in. Light
breaks through the drawn curtains enabling him to see
clearly his sister asleep on her side, Dawn spooning her.
Dino has no idea what to do.

CUT TO:

INT. SUMMERS HOUSE - MORNING

Buffy CRACKS her neck, pleasantly therapeutic. She halts in
the kitchen entrance, bemused as Anya tries to feed pancakes
to Willow with the Female breezily watching.

ANYA

You had no problem opening wide
last night.

WILLOW

A mouth and--and--alligator hands
are two very different things.

ANYA

Admit it, you're ashamed of me.

WILLOW

(dead serious)

I'm ashamed of you.

Anya attentively eyes Willow.

ANYA

You don't mean that.

(like a drill instructor)
EAT!

Buffy waves over the Female. They go into the living room.

BUFFY
Do you know why Anya's in my house
at seven o'clock in the morning?

FEMALE
I'm not up on the details, but I
have an active imagination. Want
my version?

BUFFY
If you care to see me puke.

FEMALE
Please do your best not to... I
plan on feeding myself some
pancakes. First--
(pulling a paper out
of her pocket)
--Faith asked me to give you this.

Buffy takes and reads it.

BUFFY
Couldn't do it herself?

FEMALE
She said something about plants.

BUFFY
Naturally. Looks like you did good
work. Spike try anything?

The Female mimics a hand-job.

BUFFY
Master vamps--master perverts.
(beat)
Thanks for this. You're an asset
to this group--we can never have
enough slayers. I still don't get
why you felt the need to dodge
first contact.

FEMALE
(a beat; wryly)
I'm shy.

Buffy smiles. Buffy glances at the kitchen.

BUFFY

Uptown has one of those 50's-style
diners. Can't vouch for their
pancakes...

FEMALE

(smiling)

I'm experimental. Especially when
the experiment is funded by someone
else.

Buffy and the Female head for the door.

BUFFY

Do you have a name? Or do I call
you Sycamore, Willow's non-cousin?

FEMALE

Victoria.

(beat; sly)

A slayer with a kinky streak...
sound familiar?

BUFFY

You'll get more out of life by not
listening to Spike.

FEMALE

Mm hmm.

BUFFY

I'm paying, so stuff it.

CUT TO:

INT. CRYPT - MORNING

Spike eases into a dimly lit room, drying his face with a
towel. DRUSILLA resembles a corpse on the bed.
She's splayed out on her back, eyes wide open minus the
blinking.

SPIKE

I think I finally got that dick's
aura off me. That whore'll get
hers.

(off Drusilla's silence)

Bloody hell Dru, stop talking so much!

(frustrated by more silence)

Blah blah blah, that's how the message is playing in the scrambled egg of your consciousness. You don't have to say it--you're pissed. Got the juices of malevolence flowing, unable to be sated by the thought of slayer blood spicing up those same veins. Promises tend to ring hollow the more you promise 'em.

(moving to Drusilla's side, getting in close)

I'll do it again though--I promise you'll enjoy her for as long as this life lasts. You understand where I'm coming from on this. It's the way I'm built. An attachment I can't shake, no different from me and you. I can't help it luv. I want you both. I will have you both. I'll sire her...

(whispering)

...life and death goes on.

Spike plants a kiss on Drusilla's forehead. She's seemingly catatonic. Spike senses the futility of the moment and goes into another room. When the coast is clear, Drusilla's eyelids flutter. She lazily rolls over to the edge and reaches underneath the bed. She pulls out a doll and brings it to rest on her chest. The doll's got blonde hair and a pastel outfit. Drusilla gazes remarkably at the doll before vamping out, a grin snaking across her lips. Close on Drusilla's demented demon visage. Close on the eerily familiar doll:

FADE OUT